H E L L B L A Z E R

Issue 238

"THE SMOKE"

by

Andy Diggle

Second Draft
REVISED FOR LETTERING

www.andydiggle.com

PAGE 1

1) Full-width, aerial establishing shot of Brixton, South London. Leaden-gray skies, absolutely HAMMERING with rain.

CAPTION
Ah, the great British summertime.

2) BIG, medium-distant establishing shot of the EFFRA pub, the doorway of which opens straight onto the pavement. JOHN CONSTANTINE stands sheltering in the open doorway for a smoke, with a glass of gin-and-tonic in one hand and a Silk Cut in the other, his coat collar turned up against the rain. A dozen or more cigarette butts are scattered at his feet - he's been here a while, and he's looking sullen.

CAPTION
Ever had one of those days? Woken up by a car alarm at five a.m., and it's been all downhill from there.

CAPTION
And the cherry on the cake? They've just banned smoking in pubs.

3) Move in close on John's pissed-off expression, scowling darkly as he takes a drag on his smoke.

CAPTION
Of course, they won't let you drink in the street, either...

CAPTION
Which leaves me hovering in the doorway like the ghost of bloody Christmas past, trying not to look like a bouncer.

4) Angle on John's wrist-watch as he glances at it.

CAPTION
And just to add insult to injury, it's starting to look like <u>Effra's</u> stood me up.

PAGE 2

1) FLASHBACK. Low-angle shot. Suddenly we're back in ancient times, when South London was a landscape of forests and rolling green hillsides. A smallish river flows down from a wooded hillside towards and past us. In the extreme foreground on panel left, the feet of a NAKED WOMAN step from the water of the river - although from this low angle we can't see any higher than her calves. In medium-background, panel right, a small group of ancient Celtic fishermen kneel and prostrate themselves before her, worshipping her, offering gifts of fish.

CAPTION
Effra's a naiad, or a nixie. Or possibly an undine. I dunno, I'm a little fuzzy on Celtic water spirits.

CAPTION
Whatever, she's the guardian of a minor river that used to flow from what's now Crystal Palace, heading north through Brixton to the Thames.

2) Now we're in 1860, looking along a cobbled street with buildings to either side. The river is now little more than a muddy stream running along one side of the road. A team of NAVVIES (manual laborers) are building a low, arched tunnel (culvert) over the river-ditch, burying it from view. It's all very low-tech - just hand-tools, shoulder hods, and a horse-and-cart to carry materials.

CAPTION
But that was a long time ago - and as the city built up around her, the river Effra gradually got built over.

CAPTION
A hundred and fifty years ago it disappeared altogether, becoming another of London's fabled lost rivers, channeled through underground culverts and storm drains...

3) Now we're down in the dark, dank sewer - a low, brick-arched tunnel, barely high enough to stand in. Rats swim in the water.

CAPTION
And Effra's been down there ever since, guarding her namesake with no-one but the sewer rats to worship her.

4) Bigger. Suddenly we're back up in the bright, sunny open air. EFFRA, the river spirit, is dancing in the fountain in Trafalgar Square in modern times, and our first proper look at her is glorious. She's a beautiful girl in her early 20s, with wild, curly red hair and freckles. She's laughing joyously as she dances in the ankle-high water, throwing his arms up above her in the spray from the fountains. She's wearing scruffy, faded, cut-off blue jeans with a plain white T-shirt and bare feet. She's a natural beauty, NOT a made-up sex-bomb; fresh-faced and mischievous, and we like her instantly.

CAPTION
Not that you'd know to look at her that she's been down on her luck.

CAPTION
She's every man's wet dream - almost literally. Beautiful, fun-loving, and drinks like a fish...

CAPTION
Unfortunately she also <u>fucks</u> like a fish, but that's water spirits for you.

PAGE 3

1) Now we're back in the present. John steps out into the rain, placing his empty glass on the pub window-ledge. A sticker in the window reads, LOVE YOUR LUNGS! IT IS AGAINST THE LAW TO SMOKE ON THESE PREMISES.

CAPTION
I'd got word she was in some sort of trouble, and wanted to meet me here at the Effra Hall Tavern...

CAPTION
But it's been three hours, and at this rate I'm either going to drown or snap into a nicotine-withdrawal-induced killing frenzy.

2) John stalks off away from us towards BRIXTON TUBE STATION, trailing smoke. His hands in his pockets, his shoulders hunched and his coat-collar turned up against the rain.

CAPTION
Bollocks to it. Time to cut my losses and call it a night.

3) Now we're down in the ticket hall of the tube station. John stands in front of an automated ticket machine set into the wall, feeding coins into the slot. Still in a foul mood. His cigarette is gone now; you can't smoke on the Underground either.

JOHN
Four quid for a single?
(link)
It's a bloody racket, this is...

4) Low angle, looking up at John as he gazes down at the ticket in his hand with a puzzled frown. (London Underground tickets are cardboard rectangles about the size of a credit card; the underside is white with a black magnetic stripe across it).

CAPTION
Of course, it turns out the city has other plans for me.

5) John's POV, close on the ticket. The upper face of the ticket is pink card; but instead of the usual price and destination info, the ticket has the following words printed on it in the same font:

GO TO HER

PAGE 4

1) Inset. John lowers the ticket and turns to speak to the ticket hall at large. Commuters and tourists glance at him, wondering who he's talking to.

JOHN
Alright, Map, stop playing silly buggers. I'm not in the mood.
(link)
If you've got something to tell me, just spit it out.

2) BIG, almost a full-page splash. We are looking up past John from behind, as he looks up at a DOT MATRIX display hanging from the ceiling. Usually they display passenger information about trains times, but this one says in bright orange dot-matrix letters:

THE SMILERS ARE AT THE GATE

JOHN
Oh, great...
(link)
"Help me, Obi-Wan Kenobi, you're my only hope."

TITLE AND CREDITS
THE SMOKE

1) BIG. Aerial establishing shot of the tunnel-mouth of the river Effra - little more than an arched gate set into the stone wall of the River Thames beneath the MI6 building on the south side of Vauxhall Bridge (don't worry, I'll provide visual reference). This is a few days ago - overcast with gray clouds, but not raining.

Traffic on the bridge; a couple of red double-decker buses parked at the bus stop. Two people are waiting by the bus stop to greet a third as he steps off the number 36 bus.

The group waiting are DEREK (late 30s, a grubby-looking eco-warrior type with white man's dreadlocks, wearing army-surplus gear); MEGAN (black, mid 30s; an attractive photo-journalist with a high-end digital SLR camera hanging around her neck). Stepping off the bus to meet them is NATHAN (early 30s, hip, sarcastic).

LOCATION CAPTION
YESTERDAY

DEREK
Nathan, you made it! Fantastic!
(link)
Your lovely colleague's already here. Welcome to the inaugural expedition of the U.E.C.!

2) Nathan shakes Derek's hand, looking slightly awkward and embarrassed to be there.

NATHAN
Hi, Derek.
(link)
The, *uh*, the what?

3) Derek proudly pulls open his jacket to reveal a T-shirt with the words "GET LOST!" stencilled across the chest in bold white letters, with "Urban Explorers Collective" in smaller letters beneath.

DEREK
The Urban Explorers Collective!
(link)
Here, I got T-shirts printed up. You can have one for a fiver, they're members only.

4) Nathan looks wry, fake-pained, gently sarcastic.

NATHAN

Wow, I didn't know it was a collective. I would've practised my secret handshake.

PAGE 6

1) As they all stroll along the pavement together in a loose group, Nathan turns to Megan, who is fiddling with her camera and not really paying him any attention. Nathan wants to charm her, but can't really pull it off.

NATHAN
Alright, Megan?

MEGAN
Hello, Nathan...

NATHAN
It's good to be working with, *uh*--
(link)
That is, that looks like a really nice camera.

2) Megan makes a polite attempt at a smile, but her heart's not really in it and we can see that in her eyes. She's tired of being hit on by social misfits, and she just wants to get on with the expedition.

MEGAN
Actually, Nathan, it's a piece of crap, but I didn't want to risk the ten-meg Nikon if we're going to be roughing it.
(link)
So, Derek - shall we get started or what?

3) View from the shore. With forced jollity, Derek clambers onto an aluminium ladder set into the Thames wall beside the bridge, leading down to the exposed shore below. Above, Nathan leans over the wall, peering down with his nose wrinkled.

DEREK
Onwards! And remember the urban explorer's creed--
(link)
"Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints!"

NATHAN
Right on.
(link)
Aw mate, it <u>stinks</u> down there...

4) Now Derek stands in font of the mouth of the Effra tunnel, gesturing to it proudly. An inscription above the dark tunnel mouth reads EFFRA.

DEREK
What do you think, *eh*?
(link)
How many people must have crossed over Vauxhall Bridge without even knowing there's a piece of history right under their feet?

5) Low angle, looking up past them from behind as they stare up at the EFFRA sign above the dark, open tunnel mouth (refs).

DEREK
I remember when I was little, I'd glance down and wonder about these old river tunnels...
(link)
I used to imagine all the places they might lead, all the secrets they could hold...

PAGE 7

1) View from deep INSIDE the dark tunnel, looking out towards the light. The group move in towards us, flashlight beams flickering on the damp stone walls. The water flows no more than a few inches deep across their boots.

DEREK
There's a maze of hidden places all around us in the city. Old sewer tunnels, maintenance ducts, air vents, storm drains, loading bays...
(link)
You know there are over a dozen derelict tube stations dotted around London? All just sitting there, dark and empty, just waiting to be explored...

2) Medium close on Derek, rapt, his face upturned, under-lit by reflected torchlight...

DEREK
We only ever see a fraction of the real city. Most of it's hidden from view, just inches away...
(link)
But it might as well be the dark side of the moon.

3) Nathan looks mildly nervous as the proceed into the gloom. Derek turns back to face him, mildly scornful, gently needling.

NATHAN
Are you sure you know where you're going? I mean, what if we take a wrong turn or something?

DEREK
There aren't any branches in the tunnel, no wrong turns to take.
(link)
What's the matter, mate? Scared of the dark?

4) Nathan, sarcastically defensive.

NATHAN
Yeah, that's right, I'm really scared.
(link)

Who knows, we might run into a
haunted shopping trolley or a pack
of feral traffic cones.

5) View from behind the three explorers as they move down the tunnel. Up ahead we can see light at the end of the tunnel...

DEREK
Hang on. That’s odd...
(link)
Have we doubled back the way we
came, or... ?

MEGAN
What’s up?

DEREK
This, *uh*-- This must be new.
(link)
The tunnel’s supposed to head north
for miles, it shouldn’t come out
into the open. We must have taken a
wrong turn somewhere...

1) They emerge from the end of the tunnel into twilight. Unlike the old Victorian tunnel they entered by the Thames, this exit is a modern concrete culvert, although grimy and overgrown with weeds. An aluminium grille has been bent back to allow passage. The culvert is choked with urban litter, and an old shopping trolley lying in its side. Derek is in the lead, squinting in the sunlight, confused. Nathan stoops to step out under the grille behind him. Megan brings up the rear.

NATHAN
We walked in a straight line.
(link)
Where are we, then? It all looks derelict...

DEREK
I'm just trying to get my bearings. We can't have traveled more than a few hundred yards, but...
(link)
We should be able to see the MI6 building at Vauxhall Cross, but I don't recognize...
(link)
... any of this...

2) Nathan turns to Megan. She looks around, impressed, raising her camera. They have emerged into an area of desolate urban waste-ground, a "brownfield site" as they are known. An area roughly the size of a football pitch, ringed on three sides with an old crumbling red-brick wall and patched with the concrete foundations of a long-demolished building. The fourth side opens onto an empty street, across the road of which is a row of boarded-up shops. The whole place looks like a demilitarized zone; no people, no traffic. Desolate. The odd burned-out car, old shopping trolleys lying on their sides. Choked with scrub weeds like wild buddleias. In the far background, the broken, dark windows of derelict warehouses. I'll send you links to some "Derelict London" websites for inspiration! Or picture the kind of bleak, desolate urban environments in HALF LIFE 2, if you've played it.

NATHAN
What do you think, Megan? This the sort of thing you want for the "Hidden London" piece?

MEGAN
It's <u>perfect</u>.
(link)
I didn't even think you <u>could</u> get lost in the middle of Vauxhall. Who knew?

3) View from behind Nathan (panel left) and Megan (panel right) as they study a graffiti-covered wall. Megan snaps a photo of it. Nathan points to a big spray-painted SMILEY FACE that dominates the panel. Except the face isn't smiling; the mouth is turned down at the sides, with a vertical 'cut' across each corner of the mouth, making it resemble a razor-blade Joker smile. Instead of eyes, the face has a single X, like an eye squeezed shut in pain. Other graffiti includes "RAPE CAB" followed by an 070 phone number; "TRUST THE BEER SCOOTER", "LORD HAW-HAW WAS HERE" and "CHOPPER". Just try and leave some space for the dialogue!

NATHAN
God, this takes me back...

MEGAN
What is it?

NATHAN
When I was a teenager back in the eighties, there was this big panic at my school about the <u>Chelsea Smilers</u>.
(link)
This was supposed to be their <u>tag</u>.

4) Reverse angle. Megan lowers her camera as she turns to Nathan, frowning.

MEGAN
"Chelsea Smilers"?

NATHAN
Yeah, they were supposedly these psycho footie fans who'd grab random kids off the street and bundle them into the back on their blue Transit van.
(link)
Story went, if you supported the wrong football club they'd slit the sides of your <u>mouth</u> open with a <u>razor</u>.
(link)
Hence, Chelsea Smilers.

PAGE 9

1) Derek comes up to join them. Megan turns away from Nathan, appalled by what she's hearing.

MEGAN
Fuck's sake.
(link)
Kids.

DEREK
The blue van! God, I remember that. Our headmaster gave us a big lecture about how it was all just an urban myth that had got out of hand.
(link)
We all believed it, though. For years after, we'd still get shit-scared every time we saw a--

2) View looking out past Derek in the foreground, panel left. He looks down the empty street to see a lone, dark blue TRANSIT VAN in the middle distance, travelling towards them at high speed. No other traffic, no-one else around. The van has no license plate.

DEREK
Blue...
(link)
Transit van...

3) BIG! The Transit van screeches to a halt beside them, the side loading door sliding open to reveal TWO CHELSEA SMILERS! Urban myths made flesh. They wear jeans and T-shirts, but their faces are hidden by blank masks with the Chelsea Smiler smiley-tag spray-painted on it. They each carry a barber's straight razor. They lean out of the open van door, reaching for us, infinitely menacing --

4) -- and they GRAB DEREK, hauling him in off his feet! Nathan and Megan are frozen in shock --

DEREK
Aaah!

5) The van speeds towards us, away from Nathan and Megan, who are frozen in shock. Derek's legs flail from the still-open door as he struggles in vain to free himself while being dragged inside --

NATHAN
Derek - !

PAGE 10

1) Derek’s POV. The Smilers loom over us in the van’s dark interior, evil and menacing, bringing a razor up towards us --

Jared: The Smilers’ speech balloons are ragged and raspy. Thanks!

SMILER
Name.
(link)
Your.
(link)
Team!

2) Close on Derek, pressed back against the metal wall of the van’s interior with the blade of a straight razor held across his open mouth, pressed hard enough to prevent him speaking clearly; almost hard enough to draw blood. His eyes are wide with mortal terror --

DEREK
It-- It's Chelsea! I'm-- I'm
supposed to say Chelsea, right... ?
(link)
Just p-please, don't--

3) Derek’s POV. Closer on the Smiler as he viciously SLASHES the razor sideways! A thin trail of blood whips sideways, following the arc of the razor --

SMILER
LIAR!

4) View from behind Nathan and Megan in the foreground as the RUN down the street. The van recedes into the distance up ahead - they’re losing it...

FROM VAN
(jagged)
Nnnaaaaaagh!

NATHAN
Derek! Derek - !

1) Reverse angle. Nathan stops in the middle of the street, bent over with his hands on his knees, absolutely exhausted. Megan catches up from behind, wide-eyed --

MEGAN
Jesus-- Jesus Christ...
(link)
Did you get the number plate?

NATHAN
Wasn't... wasn't one...

2) Megan fiddles with her mobile phone, frantic and upset. Nathan straightens up, growing suspicious, thoughtful...

MEGAN
We need to call the police--
(link)
Fuck! I can't get a signal. Is your phone working?

NATHAN
Wait a minute, just hang on a sec. Of course --
(link)
It's a wind-up! Has to be!

3) Megan can't believe what she's hearing. Nathan grins, self-satisfied, thinking he's solved the mystery.

MEGAN
What are you talking about? We just saw them grab him off the street!

NATHAN
Come on, he set up the whole thing! Why do you think they were wearing masks? They were probably his mates from the "collective".
(link)
He's just trying to get some column inches by scaring the shit out of the Time Out journos.

4) Nathan stands there with his hands in his pockets. Megan gets in his face, hands on hips, accusing --

NATHAN
Whatever, the joke's on him.
(link)

I don’t really fancy spending the rest of the afternoon validating Derek’s desperate little cry for attention, do you?

MEGAN
Yeah? Well if this is just a stupid prank, tell me one thing, smart arse...

5) PULL BACK into a high, wide aerial shot, looking down on the street from the rooftop of an adjacent building. A sinister BLACK-CLAD FIGURE crouches on the chimney-pot in the extreme foreground, looking down on them...

MEGAN
Where is everybody?

PAGE 12

1) Back to street level. In the foreground, Megan STARES UP in horror at something she's just seen off-panel. Behind her, Nathan turns his back on her and starts away walking back down the street the way they just came - except now there's an old graffiti-covered WALL across the road, blocking the way back...

NATHAN
I dunno, maybe we're on Trigger Happy TV--
(link)
Hang on, where's the river tunnel gone? Everything looks different...

2) Megan's POV, looking up at the mysterious figure as it LEAPS from the rooftop like a human flea! It's in mid-leap here, stark against the white sky, a hundred feet up - an impossible, inhuman jump --

3) The figure LANDS in a crouch in the extreme foreground, his back to us. Nathan and Megan back away in shock and horror --

4) Reverse angle to reveal the figure in all his glory! He's SPRING-HEELED JACK, an infamous Victorian urban myth. A tall, thin man wearing tight black leather clothing, and shiny black riding boots with Cuban heels. His fingers end in cruel steel claws. His long thin face looks wicked, diabolical, with a pointed chin, glowing red eyes, long pointed ears and tiny sharp teeth. He looks gleefully wicked and cruel.

JACK
(ragged)
Hello, pretty!
(link)
Give us a feel!

5) Jack GRABS Megan roughly, ripping her shirt open and trying to fondle her breasts! Megan is frantic with horror, struggling to fight this lecherous demon off --

MEGAN
Aaaaaaaahh!

PAGE 13

1) Nathan struggles to pull Jack off her --

MEGAN
Get him off, Get him off!
Gettimoffmeeeee!

NATHAN
Get your hands off, you fucking perv - !

2) Without even letting go of Megan, Jack turns and BREATHES BLUE FIRE INTO NATHAN'S FACE!

NATHAN
(jagged)
Aaaaaagh!

3) Nathan falls back onto the road, SCREAMING, with his face on fire!

NATHAN
(jagged)
Fffuhh! Fuuuuuuhhh!

4) Jack LEAPS away over rooftops, laughing!

JACK
(ragged)
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

5) WIDE, low angle, worm's eye POV. Megan kneels in the middle of the empty street with Nathan cradled in her lap. Her eyes are wide, like a rabbit in the headlights, in post-traumatic shock. Mascara-streaked tears on her cheeks. Nathan is unconscious, his face a smoking, blackened ruin, most of his hair burned off. Our POV is far enough back to make them look very lost and alone in the wide open, desolate urban space...

MEGAN
What... ?
(link)
What just happened... ?

PAGE 14

1) Wide establishing shot. Now we're back in the real world. It's NIGHT, still pissing with rain. John Constantine stands on the embankment above the Effra tunnel, beside Vauxhall Bridge, behind the MI6 building. He holds a soggy newspaper over his head in a doomed attempt to keep the rain off him. He looks miserable.

JOHN
Alright, Map, I got your message. This had bloody well better be good!

2) MAP appears next to John as a "holographic" figure composed of raindrops. Map is a middle-aged black man with an intense, humorless visage - see previous issues for reference.

MAP
Far from it.
(link)
The Shadow Cabinet has sent hunting parties abroad. They have already made incursions into our world.
(link)
And as word spreads, they grow stronger.

3) Two-shot, John and Map.

JOHN
I thought the gates were supposed to be guarded. And that's your department...
(link)
What's all this got to do with Effra?

MAP
Her river has become a new gate.

4) Close on Map; his eyes are shadowy sockets.

MAP
For a hundred and fifty years, every passer-by who walked the embankment or glanced from the window of a bus saw this tunnel mouth and wondered. Speculated. Imagined what it was, and where it might lead.

(link)
Over time, all that conjecture has <u>congealed</u> into something substantial enough to intersect with <u>reality</u>.

5) Close on John, scowling.

JOHN
And the Smilers got Effra. Shit...
(link)
Question is, what do they <u>want</u>?

6) Closer on Map, intense.

MAP
Isn't it obvious?
(link)
They want to be <u>real</u>.

PAGE 15

1) Two-shot, John and Map. Leave space for back-and-forth dialogue.

JOHN
I seem to be missing the part where this is somehow my problem.
(link)
You're supposed to be the all-powerful God of London, or whatever the fuck you are these days. Just seal the gate from the inside and leave 'em to it.

MAP
I cannot risk entering Shadow London.

JOHN
Why not?

MAP
Because I am afraid of what I might become there.

2) John.

JOHN
Marvelous.
(link)
Well, if you think I'm wandering alone into that madhouse, you're off your bloody rocker, mate.
(link)
Why would I go and do something like that?

3) Map.

MAP
Because yesterday, three civilians stumbled through the Effra gate into Shadow London...
(link)
... and I believe there may yet be a faint twitch of life in that withered organ you once called a conscience.

4) Very low angle, looking up past the EFFRA sign above the tunnel mouth. John stands at the wall above, looking sadly down at us.

Reluctant, but resigned to what he must do. Raindrops tumble down towards us. Map has gone.

JOHN

Shit.

PAGE 16

1) Back in Shadow London, it's still twilight. It's always twilight here. MEGAN flees towards us, terrified. She's covered in cuts and bruises; she's been here a while. Behind her, the Chelsea Smilers' van speeds down the road towards us, Smilers leaning out of the doors and windows, jeering. Spring Heeled-Jack bounds over the rooftops after her like a crazed hobgoblin. Like an image from a chase nightmare.

MEGAN
Somebody help me - !

2) View from behind Megan as he runs straight into JOHN CONSTANTINE, who stands in front of the metal grille of the Effra culvert! Except now, the culvert emerges from a new location in the wall of a derelict building...

MEGAN
Oh - !
(link)
P-please, you've got to help me - !
(link)
Th-- They killed Nathan, they took Derek, they've been chasing me for--

JOHN
Easy, luv. It's the cavalry.

3) Wide. View from behind John as he stands his ground, facing off against Jack and the Smilers who surround them. Jack steps forward, leering menacingly.

JOHN
Back off, Big Ears.
(link)
She's with me.

JACK
Who are you to stand against us?

4) Big, bold, iconic image of John, fearless, standing his ground with a Fuck You look in his eye. Megan beside him.

JOHN
I'm John bloody Constantine, that's who.

5) They Smilers and Jack are taken aback, genuinely shocked and a little nervous to hear this.

JOHN

Yeah, that’s right.

(link)

I’ve got a reputation.

PAGE 17

1) Close on two of the Smilers, wielding razors, sinister --

SMILER # 1
You.
(link)
Believe.
(link)
In.
(link)
Us.

SMILER # 2
That.
(link)
Makes.
(link)
Us.
(link)
Strong!

2) John draws a cigarette from a pack of Silk Cut.

JOHN
Yeah, but you believe in me - and I'm real. So who do you think gets the upper hand?
(link)
You lot, you're just a bunch of bloody pub stories. And I've got something that'll slay you dead in your tracks...

3) Closer on John. Hard eye contact.

JOHN
The truth.

4) Jack, leering, intense --

JACK
I am Spring-Heeled Jack! Scourge of London! The Devil on the chimney stack!
(link)
You will fear me - !

5) John jabs his unlit cigarette at us, accusing --

JOHN

Will I bollocks. You know who you really are... ?

(link)

A sad little toff called Henry de la Power Beresford, the third Marquess of Waterford, who got pissed-up one night in 1837 and decided to dress up as a devil to scare the shit out of some dozy chambermaid who gave him the elbow.

PAGE 18

1) JACK BREATHES FIRE AT US --

JACK

Lies!

2) John leans forward with the cigarette between his lips, lighting his cigarette off the blue fire which washes around him and Megan as if flowing around an invisible bubble protecting them. He is unafraid.

JOHN

Cheers for the light. I've been gagging.

(link)

Thing is, you can't actually breathe blue fire. Waterford and his copycats just spat a mouthful of brandy over a lit match - which makes you about as intimidating as a flamin' Christmas pudding.

3) John blows smoke at us.

JOHN

You're nothing more than a practical joke that caught on for a while back in the nineteenth century. A fucking student prank.

(link)

More importantly, you're dead. Waterford fell off his horse and broke his stupid bloody neck in 1859.

4) Jack withers, the flesh rotting and falling from his bones, decomposing before our eyes like a time-lapse movie!

JACK

N-no! It's not true! It's not truuuuue

5) Same angle. Jack collapses into a pile of bone-dust.

PAGE 19

1) John turns to the Smilers, who back away, fearful of him --

JOHN
Right then, you vicious little toe rags...

2) BIG! John stands hovering a few feet off the ground, floating like an angry god! Fiery energy crackles from his clawed hands and eyes! Fiery magical symbols burn in the air around him! Megan is backed up against the wall behind him, as afraid of him as of the Smilers --

JOHN
Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough!

3) The lead Smiler cowers like a craven animal --

CAPTION
Starting to see why Map didn't want to risk setting foot in this place.

CAPTION
It's all about reputation. And I've been working on mine for a while.

SMILER
Take.
(link)
The.
(link)
Girl.
(link)
And.
(link)
Go!

4) View from inside the shadowy Effra culvert tunnel. John backs towards us into the tunnel with Megan. He holds one hand out before him, fingers splayed, casting a fiery magic rune in the air.

CAPTION
When I came in here, I had no idea how to cast a spell that would seal this gate --

CAPTION
-- but they believe I can.

CAPTION
And in this place, that’s enough to make it true.

JOHN
From now on, stick to your own turf...
(link)
Or you’ll have me to deal with!

1) Same angle as previous panel - view from behind John and Megan. The culvert grating before him has suddenly vanished, replaced by the long, dark tunnel of the real-world Effra, stretching away ahead of him into obscurity. As the exterior twilight disappears, they are plunged into semi-darkness.

CAPTION
But if the power of bullshit alone can light me up like a Pinball Wizard...

2) They limp down dark tunnel towards us, now all too frail and human.

CAPTION
... what would it do to a psychic power-station like Map?

MAP
(disembodied voice)
Well done, John.
(link)
Now leave the girl and go on your way.

3) John and Megan pause in the tunnel, defensive --

MEGAN
"The girl"? It's Megan. I'm Megan.
(link)
Is that right... ?

JOHN
She's in shock, Map. I'm not leaving her anywhere. I'm taking her to the nearest hospital...
(link)
Or better still, the nearest pub. I think we could both use a swift sharpener after that.

4) MAP appears before them in the tunnel, blocking their way --

MAP
You know the mechanism. Urban myths spread like a virus.
(link)
If word gets out, the story spreads... and they grow stronger.

5) Closer on Map as he holds out his hand, magical energy crackling from it --

MAP

Why do you think they let her <u>live</u>?

PAGE 21

1) John turns in shock to look at the space beside him where Megan was standing - but she's vanished, replaced by a fading wisp of residual energy --

JOHN
No - !
(link)
... Shit, Map, where'd you send her?

2) Close on Map, sinister.

MAP
Where else? To Shadow London.
(link)
And there she will remain, locked behind the gate you sealed.

3) View from behind Map as John runs at him, utterly ENRAGED, as if he's going to punch him - although John is no action hero, so don't make it look too macho --

JOHN
You treacherous cunt, Map! She's a human being! You can't just consign her to that!
(link)
You needed me to seal the gate and you used her and her friends as bait, didn't you? You never even wanted me to bring 'em back alive!

4) Map suddenly swells into a demonic silhouette with red eyes and a gaping, tooth-lined mouth, filling the tunnel and ENGULFING John! Check out HAUNTED part 4 for reference!

MAP
I do what must be done.
(link)
For London.

5) JOHN falls helplessly through the dark void within Map --

JOHN
Aah!

PAGE 22

1) John lands hard on his hands and knees on a paved street in the rain. We're too close to make out any more sense of our location --

JOHN
Uuhf-!

2) BIG. Low angle from behind John. He stands to look up at the EFFRA PUB, which stands before him in all its glory. It's dark and raining hard out here, soaking John; but the lights in the pub window are warm and inviting...

CAPTION
Still raining.

CAPTION
Megan. She said her name was Megan.

CAPTION
I wonder who she was? How long she'll last... ?

CAPTION
Fuck, I don't even want to think about it.

3) John walks into the well-lit pub door, his back to us, hunched, like a broken man, leaving us out in the dark and the rain...

CAPTION
And that's for the best, ennit? Forget the whole bloody thing.

CAPTION
I'll raise a glass to you, Megan...

CAPTION
... as I drown my sorrows in the Effra.

[THE END]